

# Workplace Supervisor

September 2015

## Testimonials

Here are some quotes from HR Managers who recently called on CONCERN for a Management Consultation:

*"The Counselor was very professional and caring. She was extremely helpful in assisting the employees understanding on how to get through this difficult time. We appreciated the quick response from CONCERN."*

*"I did appreciate the counselor making himself available with materials and giving us his time. He had spoken to one individual most affected and had given him advice to make sure he was eating and exercising so as not to feel depressed. I was pleased with the way CONCERN handled the situation."*

*"The service and response from CONCERN was great based on the circumstances."*



## FAQs for Managing Employees

*We are pleased to introduce the newly redesigned CONCERN website, an easy to navigate resource for your organization and your employees. Visit the site at [www.concern-eap.com](http://www.concern-eap.com) to experience it for yourself.*



**Q. What is the best way for me to increase my level of cultural sensitivity in the workplace, and what is the best argument for doing so?**

**A.** The best argument for increasing one's level of cultural sensitivity is to improve engagement of workers and their job satisfaction. Gallup polling organization has maintained a rolling seven-day average of their Index of Employee Engagement since first reporting on it several years ago. It stood at only 31% recently for workers in general, but if you add discrimination and lack of cultural sensitivity to the mix of reasons normally cited, this problem is compounded. Improving cultural sensitivity is a professional responsibility, although larger organizations with training and education budgets can go about the task with more ease. To enhance your cultural competence (also referred to as cultural intelligence or "CQ,") consider books such as David Livermore's *The Cultural Intelligence Difference*. Another helpful resource is [Executive Planet](http://ExecutivePlanet.com). This website describes virtually every aspect of business communication, family values, and the social customs of every country in the world. Want to know what not to talk about when you meet someone from Paraguay? You'll find it here.

**Q. When an organizational crisis happens, what can supervisors do to take charge and influence a large group of employees to remain calm and in control? I've had this experience a couple of times, and frankly I've felt caught off guard and not sure where to start or how to take charge.**

**A.** When an organizational crisis (large cutbacks, merger, or great loss) suddenly occurs, supervisors must demonstrate leadership. Confusion can reign, rumors can fly, and your work unit could appear on the edge of dysfunction. The need to demonstrate leadership can be scary. Insecurity can lead a manager to defer to someone else—for example, an assistant supervisor, “right-hand man,” or an employee with some perceived leadership ability. Avoid this temptation. Instead, grab the reins. Gather employees in a room and use a circle-type seating arrangement. Keep your cool, because during a crisis, employees take cues on how to respond from those in charge. Clarify the problem, update the status, and communicate a goal, objective, or response to the crisis. Next, discuss with each person, using direct eye contact, what he or she is going to do or what role he or she will play in the solution or in achieving the goal. Open a discussion about how CONCERN might help, and gauge support for its role.

**Q. I have a few employees who are 15 to 20 years older than their new manager. I imagine some are trying to adjust to the reality of a boss who is young enough to be their child. I'm the department head. Should I coach them now or expect them to “deal with it”?**

**A.** Wait until an issue exhibits itself before you step in. Being supervised by a younger employee can raise difficult feelings, but behavior is everything in the workplace, so monitor it. Many older workers, “bothered” by an age difference at first, readily cope in healthy ways and see the upside. Can your employees cooperate and demonstrate mutual respect? If so, view the age difference as a nonissue.

For many older workers, a younger supervisor can be an exciting opportunity to learn about different and perhaps better ways of doing things, and more about technology while experiencing the wonders of more efficiency. Some older workers may see a young supervisor as a representation of what they did not accomplish, but most will adapt successfully and this awareness may never turn to conflict. If conflict occurs, address it. If it does not subside, then involve CONCERN. Problems you might see could include parenting-like behaviors on the part of the older worker, insubordination, disrespectful tone, arguing, or other forms of disrespect, even bullying.

**Q. I recently participated in a CONCERN: EAP supervisor training. Why is the problem affecting the employee and identified by CONCERN not disclosed to the supervisor?**

**A.** Knowledge of the employee’s personal problem by the supervisor is not needed to manage performance, quality of work, attendance, or conduct on the job. This principle is why CONCERN easily fits with personnel management models of organizations. There are overarching reasons for not disclosing personal problems. They relate to confidentiality and perceived confidentiality of CONCERN. CONCERN’s acceptance by the workforce depends on positive word-of-mouth promotion almost entirely related to confidentiality. This is referred to as a “program of attraction.” It is a fragile dynamic easily damaged by any perception, false or otherwise, that personal problems are disclosed to management. False perceptions are easily created, but extremely difficult to tamp down. Strict procedures that support confidentiality help businesses avoid these perceptions.

Employees and eligible dependents can request CONCERN: EAP counseling and work/life services 24/7 by calling or visiting our website.

**Call: 800.344.4222**  
**[www.concern-eap.com](http://www.concern-eap.com)**